CBS NEWS PERSON TO PERSON - VICE PRESIDENT - RICHARD NIXON (10-27-1960)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhVv_iWI3DM (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhVv_iWI3DM)

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From October 27th, 1960 CBS NEWS Charles Collingwood interviews Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Second Lady Pat Nixon just days before the 1960 Presidential Election .

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several weeks ago person to person was pleased to visit with the democratic candidate for the presidency senator john f kennedy his wife and their two and a half year old daughter caroline in spite of his very busy schedule vice president richard nixon the republican candidate for the presidency is able to accept our invitation for a chat with him and his wife too at this stage of the campaign the vice president doesn't get home very often in fact his home is apt to be a hotel room in whatever city he happens to be campaigning in in this case we called on vice president nixon in new york city where he's staying in an apartment in the waldorf astoria towers hello mrs nixon hello charles it's good to be with you well i think we're lucky to have you you with us because this has been a long and arduous campaign do you have any idea of how many miles you've traveled so far no but i know there are thousands and thousands of them well now the last time i looked it was 46 000 and i think you've probably added a few thousand since then yes we actually have but it's been very worthwhile and thrilling to travel all over the united states and see the wonderful people everywhere well according to the reporters who accompany your party you've developed into a seasoned campaigner on your own was this a natural talent mrs nixon well actually i've been campaigning with dick since 1946 and i wouldn't miss it for anything although i'm told that you never make what might be called political speeches set speeches is that right that's true because i don't feel that one person can speak for another however i talk on all the other subjects well apparently you are bearing up pretty well you look as fresh as a daisy how about the vice president well he's a real workhorse and still going strong by the way he's right in the next room would you like to go in and see him i certainly would

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certainly would mr vice president how do you do how are you charles nice to hear from you in a campaign as prolonged as this with mounting fatigue and tensions uh it must be a terrible strain do you ever get a full night's sleep very seldom as a matter of fact i usually try to sleep on thursdays i think that's the week i get to sleep this week well what what what is it that keeps you going with the campaign itself the momentum of all of the responsibilities that you have the fact that the stakes are very high the responsibility that you have to get your message across to the american people in some way you can do almost anything for a period of about two months which is the normal length of a campaign well i guess you can but campaigning across the country as you've been doing means giving up a good deal of your personal life and of course being away from washington and from your daughters well actually i think that's about the hardest part of it you you can't really have a personal life during the course of a campaign i don't think i've seen my daughters for three weeks now pat has been back home uh at least once in that period but i've been on the road continually and we naturally miss them well i've got a treat for you then because since you've been away from them for so long we've arranged for our cameras to look in on the girls at your house in washington and if you and mrs nixon wouldn't mind moving over in front of the television set you can see them how wonderful hello trisha are you there yes hi how's everything in washington oh fine is that checkers yeah oh he looks in good shape

where's your sister julie she's in the living room well now your mother and father are here in new york with me and if you and julie would like to see them and talk with them why don't you join julie inside by the television set and you can have a chat with us all right hello julie hi how'd you like to say hello to your mother

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hello to your mother and father i'd like to a lot well they're up here in new york with me and uh uh they should be coming up on that television set there can you see them uh-huh can you see them all right yes well trish is coming in from the backyard and uh you and she can see them look i know that you two have a lot to say to your daughters why don't you talk to them vice president well i really think i ought to defer to pat she she has the right i think to talk first hi honey how are you julie and trishy sorry i surely miss you but we had a good time last sunday didn't we yes well i can say this that i'm going to be home sunday so that will be the first time in three weeks we're looking forward to seeing you what do you think we should do should we go out to dinner that night yes let's go to the club that's always the same place trish is very loyal to the same place she never wants to go anyplace different on sunday night except our the country club the columbia country club where we go for dinner usually by the way we were in florida yesterday and we saw your friends and they were wondering if we were coming down for a vacation how about it [Music] would you like that yes well since we didn't have a family vacation this year maybe we can have one after the campaign's over i hope so yeah girls this is charles collingwood how do you think your father looks after all this traveling oh i think he looks pretty good but he's hard maybe but well if he is he has reason to be well now listen girls uh your mother and father and i have got some things to talk about why don't you sit there and uh and uh watch it while we have our conversation okay all right okay mr vice president do you think that julie and trisha have been working as hard on their school work as you have been on the campaign well i'm sure they think so and as a matter of fact charles i do want to say this we hear a lot these days about the

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we hear a lot these days about the things wrong with american education and there are some things that can be corrected but i want to say that i have been tremendously impressed with the interest our young people have in political affairs they come out to meetings by the thousands and they have a better understanding of our affairs in this nation in the world than i had at that age i also want to say this that as far as homework is concerned our two daughters have to do more than i did at that age so i think our schools must not be too bad well that is a good sign let me just add one other thing i can't do the homework i'm glad that pat's a teacher she's able to help mr nixon this campaign is different from former campaigns in many ways particularly the television aspect and the highly publicized debates that you and senator kennedy have been having what in your mind is the greatest value of these debates i think perhaps the greatest value is in creating public interest one of the problems in any campaign is to get people to listen usually the tendency is to vote as your grandfather or your father did or according simply to the party labels i feel very strongly myself that where a presidential election is held particularly in a critical year like this one that it is essential that people not just think in terms of traditional patterns but that they make the decision themselves on the basis of the men and the issues now these debates have millions of people hearing the candidates speak who would never come to a political meeting or never tune into political broadcast and so they serve a very good purpose in that respect have they served at all to sharpen up your own attitude toward the issues uh give you a chance to know how your opponent feels about things what's important to him and so forth to a certain extent yes i would say though in being completely objective and i'm sure senator kennedy must feel the same thing that where we have a

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feel the same thing that where we have a limited amount of time say two and a half minutes per question to discuss an issue like we'll say what should our policy be toward africa that it is terribly difficult to discuss the issues in the depth that they ought to be discussed in well isn't there another danger in extemporaneous debates of this kind of quick thinking off-the-cuff thinking as opposed to thoughtful and penetrating uh

responses that's correct uh as a matter of fact many times after a debate i'm sure we both feel if we just had a little more time that we might have given a different answer or a more thoughtful one on the other hand on the other side of the coin whoever is president is going to have to make some decisions uh very speedily at times so the people at least get a chance to see how both of us react under fire and in that respect they get a chance to make a intelligent judgment in that first debate a great deal was made of the fact that your appearance on television wasn't quite what uh you and your staff had wanted have you got anything to say about that well i've often said that there wasn't much that could be done with my face but uh looking at it from the standpoint of the technical matters i understand that uh the lighting was not apparently uh fitted particularly for the situation that i was in i apparently according to the experts should have worn a darker suit which i wore in the last debate for example and also it was suggested that i apparently was not up to my standard weight as you know i've been in the hospital and apparently whenever you are three or four pounds underweight it shows up in your face first understand i'm not making any excuses because when you go into these debates you of course have the same opportunity that your opponent has to look as well as possible but in the last two i apparently looked a little better mr vice president and mrs nixon i'd like to address this to both of both

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i'd like to address this to both of both of you in a strenuous and hard-fought political campaign like this one inevitably there are slings and arrows that seem to rise with the heat of the campaign things that get said are you personally wounded and hurt by some of the things that get said about you by the opposition and in the press actually i've always been amazed about it from the very first but i have a philosophy and i believe that if you do the right thing the very best you can and you know in your heart that you're right nothing can hurt that has been a a great philosophy to have i try to give this to the children as well how about you mr president well i think we would be less than uh candid if we were not to admit that when you do get attacks which you feel may be unfair that they do have their effect however my answer to it is always this that's a that's why we take these responsibilities people in public life in a free country have to expect that they're going to be criticized in fact if we didn't have that criticism our policies wouldn't be as effective as they ought to be and the very fact that we constantly are subjected to merciless criticism in the press and by our opponents means that it keeps us on our toes and it also means that the policies we eventually develop are better policies than they would be if we didn't have this very intensive criticism so i don't complain about it i think it's my responsibility just as it is my opponents whenever i think they're wrong to correct it and but on the other hand we cannot have a campaign without having it be hard-hitting that's the only kind that will sharpen the issues and also develop the candidates thinking but politics armors you it certainly does have has this affected the children at all some of these these criticisms and things

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these criticisms and things well i would say that it perhaps has more effect on children than it does on the uh the parents after all it's it's rather difficult for children to understand the the all the ramifications of politics sometimes for example when i've been sitting in my study reading one of the children will come in and say daddy come quick somebody's attacking you on television and i point out that again as i have on this program that that's part of the democratic process and i must say that they take it very well and i only i'm frankly very proud of the way they have responded to these political campaigns around washington mr vice president you have the reputation of being personally more introspective than outgoing sensitive and rather shy would you say that's true and if so would you attribute it to your quaker upbringing well charles i don't suppose that any individual is a good judge of what he is in the in answering a question like the one you have put but it is true that perhaps in view of my own background i'm not a natural politician you think of somebody in political life as being an outgoing backslapping type uh i must admit that i am somewhat reserved and i think that is a result of my background and my training on the other hand i do have a liking for people a great affection for people which i think in the long run is the most essential factor in political life and that's true however we may feel on issues you have to like people to be able to go through a campaign well i

was going to ask you whether this reserve or whatever you would call it has made it more difficult for you to play the role that you now find yourself in where you have to meet lots of people and lots of strange people too it'd be a lot easier and i could advise any prospective

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any prospective political uh novices who are going into the political arena it would be a lot easier not to have any inhibitions with regard to the reservations to which you refer on the other hand let's look back through our history many people who have served effectively in public office have been the shall we say the type of people that you have referred to they haven't all been the outgoing aggressive type it takes all to make up a world and it means that either type can be successful in political life mr vice president going back a long way what's the true story of how you got into politics i've often read that you'd answered a want ad is that true that's that's a slight exaggeration as a matter of fact it was in the nature of an ad in this sense a committee of uh republicans in the 12th congressional district in california had been losing elections for many years there and so they decided in the year 1946 to put a story in the newspapers inviting all people in the district who thought they might be congressmen or congressional candidates to come before this group of republicans a group of 100 leading citizens of the district and present their case i was one of those who had the opportunity of reading that story it was brought to my attention and consequently i applied i appeared before this committee along with six other prospective candidates i made a 10-minute speech probably the most important 10-minute speech i've ever made in my life and after that meeting they decided to back me for congress that's how i got where i am today mrs nixon uh you've accompanied the vice president on a great many trips both in this country as you're doing now and abroad and uh you're sometimes described as having become quite a lady diplomat do you feel that's true i don't know what uh the judgment is on my performance but i do know that it's been a wonderful experience for me

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experience for me and i just hope that i have represented the american people if i could cut in here let me answer that question they often speak of my trips abroad to 54 countries and pat has been with me on all of them except to one country austria and there's no question about her performance and i think that this is said in the best bipartisan sense that when the wives of our officials do go abroad it's terribly important that they not just go and sightsee and shop and do the things that usually women would be expected to do they should do what my wife has done visit the hospital show a concern for and an interest in people in the particularly in the poor people in the unfortunate people of other lands there is nothing that draws people in other lands closer to us than for us to show concern with their problems and the women the wise of those who travel abroad can do that much more effectively than the men mr vice president we were talking a minute ago about your start in politics in some of your public utterances both before and after your nomination it seemed to me that you've indicated that your rise to fame and authority was that you thought of it as almost an an accident a sort of feeling of fatalism do you feel that your life and career have been determined in large extent by forces outside your own control i think that everybody's life and career particularly where public service is concerned uh is is affected by forces outside their control i don't mean by that that everything is predestined but i mean that you do have to be prepared for the opportunities when they come your way but on the other hand unless you happen to be the man needed for the job at the time nothing that you can do in my opinion is going to get it for you now that's not true in business it isn't true in the law it isn't true in the professions generally

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professions generally it is true of public service in other words i have a i have a philosophy that this country is is a country of destiny i happen to believe that through the years our people some way know how to select the man for president that the times need and that the country needs i believe for example in this election that whatever the judgment is on november the 8th it will be not only the best judgment of the people but it will be best for the country that will be true whether i win or whether i lose in other words i think that the times

make the man rather than that the man make the times now speaking of the presidency the great office which you seek what in your opinion are the qualities in the president that make him a great president well the qualities that make a president a great president are the obvious ones of ability to lead standing for the right the great ideals in which this country uh has a vested interest from the time of its foundation uh the ability to articulate those ideals in a way that the people want them expressed not only here at home but abroad but if i could put it another way i i happen to believe that when we get into this discussion of what makes a great president that it isn't a question of ambition that makes a great president or his own abilities so much as it is the people themselves look at the great presidents of our history they have been great to the extent that they have represented the highest ideals the deepest emotions and faith of the american people and to the extent that the people are great that their ideals are high whoever is president of this country will be a great man now i happen to believe for that reason that in this critical period of the 60s it's tremendously essential that our people recognize the challenge that we face that they realize that it isn't enough

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that they realize that it isn't enough for us just to hold the line for america for our own freedom for our own prosperity but that it is our mission in the world to extend freedom to all the world if they have this sense of mission then whoever is president will be a great president that a president can be only as great as the people are great at a particular time thank you very much mr vice president i think we ought to say goodbye to tricia and julie who are now still down there in washington hello girls could you hear everything yeah yeah your father looked very well didn't you think yes thank you very much for coming and being with us goodbye trish bye bye julie bye and mr vice president and mrs nixon thank you very much for letting us come and take this time from your busy campaign schedule well thank you charles the time went very fast goodbye now that we have completed visits with both presidential candidates and their families we look forward to the time when we may perhaps visit the winner in the white house i'll be coming back with some coming attractions after this message

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